Region 4

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November 13, 1936.

Insect Control, R-4
Annual Report

Chief, Forest Service,

Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Our letter of October 31 contained much information concerning conditions on the Wasatch, Ashley, Uinta, Wyoming, Minidoka, Dixie, and Powell Forests which ordinarily would have been submitted in our annual report. Because of this we are not covering these Forests again except in connection with other insects not mentioned in the previous report.

There appears to have developed no material change in the huge so-called "Yellowstone project". Evidently the mountain pine beetle continues to flourish and the indications are that eventual lack of host material may prove to be the only limiting factor. Some encouragement may, however, be gleaned from the results of the Greys River survey where for the area as a whole some reductions in new attacks were noted. Individual units, it must be recognized however, indicated increases, a fact which may erase any grounds for optimism.

The Targhee Forest also reports continued activity of this epidemic in their locality as well as local fluctuations in intensity of new attacks similar to the conditions mentioned in Greys River. Mr. Evenden in a general way stated that his work on check strips indicated no abatement in the epidemic but rather a continued building up.

In the central Idaho lodgepole pine forests the mountain pine beetle epidemic continues a return to normal in most areas. It is noted, however, that sporadic local epidemics continue to flourish. In the Wood River drainage on the Sawtooth, for example, new work is apparent

in spots over much of the lodgepole pine type which escaped heavy losses during the preceding primary epidemic. In this area also mountain pine beetle work continues on a major scale in the remaining bodies of limber pine. Limber pine host material is becoming limited, however, and the continued activity of the epidemic in this type appears to be definitely limited.

The Douglas fir (D. pseudotsugae) beetle continues to show strong epidemic activity in nearly all portions of the Region. Losses have been noted to be particularly heavy on the Dixie and Powell Forests in southern Utah, sections of the Wasatch in the central part of that State and on most forests in south Idaho. No control work in this epidemic has been done or is being planned. Such control work as can be accomplished in connection with sales and administrative use on restricted areas is not being overlooked. It is apparent that certain factors, very likely climate, have brought about favorable biologic conditions for the simultaneous development of the Douglas fir beetle epidemics over a widespread section of the Intermountain Region. Artificial control appears to be hopeless and impractical except perhaps over limited areas where the Douglas fir timber represents unusually high values. In such cases temporary postponement of losses might prove worth while with the hope that the general epidemic will shortly subside. This appears to be about the third year of this epidemic.

The fir engraver beetle (Scolytus ventralis) presents a situation somewhat similar to the Douglas fir beetle. It is found in various degrees of epidemic form over practically the entire range of the white fir. The position of the Bureau of Entomology, in which we concur, is that control measures are not practical or justifiable. The one exception to this has been the work on the Wasatch Forest where thorough clean-up has been made over limited highly valued recreational areas in American Fork Canyon. In this case the Timpanogos National Monument lies in the midst of the treated area in the very center of the heaviest epidemic. In order for us to protect our work it was necessary to make a similar clean-up of Park land. Since they had no facilities or funds we did this for them to the extent of about 2,000 trees. All this was done with a transient WPA camp. Some limited similar work in the same general area is now under way. The results apparent so far in American Fork Canyon indicate at least temporary benefits. The full effect of the control work can be determined only through continued observations over a period of two or three years.

It is encouraging to note that the flat-head borer (Agrilus politus) work in maple stands in the canyons adjacent to Salt Lake City is apparently declining. We hope that a return to normal conditions of precipitation in this region will help to restore an endemic balance in the work of this insect.

Chief, F. S.

Alpine fir stands continue to sustain considerable losses from attacks of the alpine fir beetle (Dryocoetes confusus). There appears to be no material change in the status of this insect from conditions previously reported. In many cases the thinning effect which results in heavy stands from beetle attacks has a beneficial effect in releasing young and other growth in the more valuable species.

The Sawtooth Forest reports a new Douglas fir tussock moth (Hemerocampa pseudotsugae) outbreak in a number of widely scattered Douglas fir areas in the lower East Fork of Wood River inside and outside the Forest boundary. The condition was first discovered this summer. While in that vicinity Mr. Evenden visited this outbreak and has since been making some further studies on the case. It appears that little can be done here to avoid some losses. It is hoped, however, that this epidemic will, as others in this general region, be of brief duration.

On the Fishlake Forest, Beaver District, some activity by the Black Hills beetle (D. ponderosae) is noted in ponderosa pine stands. A total of only 40 new attacks are estimated to be present. A complete clean-up with ERA will be accomplished.

The Weiser Forest evidently continues to have spot developments of the western pine beetle (D. brevicomis) which have aroused some apprehension. Mr. Evenden, however, as a result of a recent visit is still of the opinion that control measures are not necessary. A more detailed report on the Weiser situation is expected from Mr. Evenden in the near future.

The Cache Forest has continued to follow up the mountain pine beetle with minor control jobs with ERA labor. This maintenance work is believed to be beneficial and should help to assure a successful project on this Forest. In order to check systematically on all lodgepole pine areas it will likely be advisable to consider a survey in the fall of 1937.

After a definite termination of the fall control operations we will plan to submit to your office a summary of accomplishments, statistical and other, together with estimates of work quantities remaining for spring completion.

Very truly yours,

Regional Forester.